

# Identification

**Determine the species and number of animals involved.** Knowing the species of animal causing damage allows you to develop a plan based on an understanding of the ecology and life history of the species. For example, because porcupines are attracted to salt, a trap should be baited with salt soaked wood.

**There is no one best method to use for prevention and control of wildlife damage around the home. Take an integrated approach and use a variety of methods and techniques. Alternate or rotate techniques and constantly try new and different approaches. You'll need to analyze your property, and then plan your landscaping, choose your plants carefully, install appropriate barriers, and remove or make the attractants less attractive.**

## Attractions

**What is attracting wildlife to your yard?**

Food and shelter are the most common attractions. **Food:** Bears, raccoons, skunks, gulls, ravens and other species are attracted to garbage, pet food, dirty barbecue grills, bird feeders, compost piles and other food sources. Always dispose of waste properly and keep food attractants out of reach:

- Remove obvious sources of food.
- Store food in animal proof containers or indoors.
- Place bird feeders out of the reach of deer.
- Use metal posts or wrap metal sheets around bird feed poles to keep out raccoons and other climbers.



Many landscape and garden plants are attractants for wildlife. One option is to plan your landscaping to eliminate as many of those preferred food plants as possible. Using wildlife repellants, repellant plants, plastic netting and fencing are other options. Your local nurseryman, garden center and county extension office are good sources of information on proper plants, repellants and garden netting for your area.

**When deer or other wildlife populations increase or as their food supplies decrease, they easily overcome their aversion to repellants and their distaste for certain plants.**

Neighbors who feed deer and bear naturally increase the number of deer and bear in the neighborhood. The result is not only damage to landscape and gardens, but also increased hazards to public safety. Urban deer may attract mountain lions and will increase the number of automobile/deer collisions. Encouraging bears to enter populated areas can habituating them to humans and is an obvious public safety hazard.



**Feeding deer and bear is illegal in Montana. Talk to your neighbors about the dangers of attracting deer or bear. If the situation continues, contact your local Game Warden for assistance.**

**Shelter:** Raccoons, skunks, squirrels, bats, mice, rats and many birds will seek shelter in and under homes, sheds and other buildings.

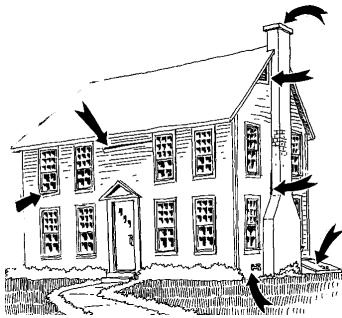
**Many times the key to living with wildlife is preventing wildlife intrusions.**

The first step to preventing intrusions is to keep your house and other buildings in good repair. Wildlife are ingenious and will take advantage of any opportunity they find. Trim tree limbs out away from the house to keep squirrels and raccoons off the roof. Place metal sheets on the corners of the house to prevent raccoons from climbing up.

**Consider how attractive your house may be to wildlife. It has many advantages over a tree or den. Your house is warm, insulated, dry, secure, and doesn't sway when the wind blows.**

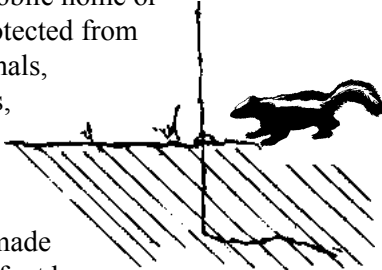
If wildlife find a weak shingle, rotted wood, or a crack in the foundation they will claw or chew their way inside. Check your home and out-buildings for areas where wildlife can enter. Common entry points include:

- Roof vents
- Foundation openings
- Roof and fascia spaces
- Roof fascia interfaces
- Plumbing vent pipes
- Cellar/crawl space doors
- Chimneys
- Window wells



Exclude wildlife by blocking, covering and sealing these entrances to prevent unwanted guests. Galvanized 1/4" or 1/2" wire will work for many openings. However, 1/2" wire may not preclude all bats. Block entrances when the animals are outside and insure that there are no young animals left inside.

The area under a porch, crawl space, mobile home or shed can be protected from burrowing animals, like like skunks, by constructing a barrier. The best barrier is made by digging a 1-foot by 1-foot trench around the base of the structure. Then attach 1/4" or 1/2" wire mesh or hardware cloth to the wall or side of the structure. Extend the wire down into the trench and bend the bottom of the wire to the outside. The wire will then form an "L" with the bottom leg extending to the outside about another foot. This buried L-shaped barrier keeps animals from digging under the structure. This same technique works along the bottom of fences. Wherever the animal digs along the barrier, it will keep meeting mesh.



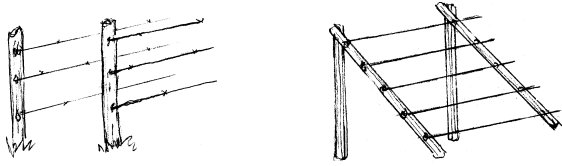
**Wildlife will also seek shelter in debris, brush, rocks, wood and lumber piles. Remove them and you will remove the attraction.**

## Harassment

During the summer water sprinklers, especially those with a concentrated jet activated by motion detectors, have been effective to deter deer and other wildlife. Sometimes a program of harassment with tennis balls, paint ball guns and other non-lethal methods is needed to deter wildlife.

## Fencing

*A variety of fencing options can be installed.*



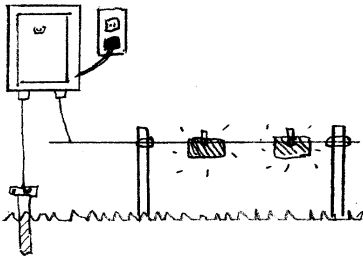
***Fencing is the foolproof method of protecting plants, trees and gardens from damage by non-climbing wildlife.***

- Fencing must be high enough to keep out the jumpers like deer. For deer the recommended fence height is 8 feet. See the **Living With Deer** brochure or web page for more information on deer fences.

- Burying a fence may be necessary to keep out the burrowers like ground squirrels, marmots and skunks.

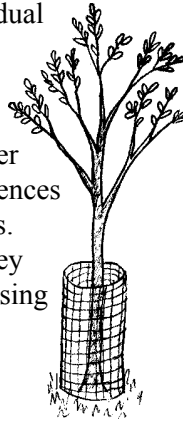
- Climbers like raccoons and squirrels will take other techniques to preclude them from your yard.

- Electric fences are often very effective, but may be illegal in your community or neighborhood.



**Keeping an active and aggressive dog enclosed in a yard is a great deterrent to most wildlife. For a dog to be effective in keeping out nocturnal wildlife, it must have access to the yard both day and night. A pet door from the house or garage will provide shelter for the dog and allow it free access to the yard.**

If fencing the entire property is out of the question, consider putting individual fences around trees and shrubs. These fences need only be 4' tall and out far enough to protect the trunk of the tree and any lower branches. After a few years the fences may be removed from many trees. As trees mature and get larger they are better able to withstand browsing and rubbing.



## Removal

***The last resort is removing the wild animal.***

Even after you have removed the attractants and installed barriers, there still may be a problem. As a last resort, you may have to remove individual animals. There are a number of lethal and non-lethal options available. Contact your local Animal Control Officer, County Extension Office, Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) Office, Animal Shelter, Humane Society or Animal Damage Control Company for assistance with other preventative methods or removal of the animal. Some animal shelters, animal control offices, and FWP offices have live traps available for you to borrow or lease. Most of these organizations maintain a list of individuals and businesses that will assist you with other remedies or removal of animals.

**Relocating an animal is usually just transferring your problem to someone else. Relocation of wild animals is a death warrant for many species.**

## For Further Assistance

There is a vast amount of information available to help you prevent and control wildlife damage. Your best sources of information are local nurserymen and garden centers, county extension offices, animal control personnel and FWP offices. Most of these organizations have brochures and websites to assist you. Listed below are a few of those helpful resources.

## For Further Information

*K-State Wildlife Management Library.* Website: <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/wldlf2/>.

*Nuisance Animals.* 1997. John Trout, Jr. Midwest Publishing. Tennyson, IN.

*Pocket Guide to The Humane Control of Wildlife in Cities & Towns.* Guy Hodge, ed. Falcon Press Publishing. Helena, MT.

*Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage.* 1994. Cooperative Extension Division. Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE.

*The Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management.* Website: <http://wildlifedamage.unl.edu/>

*Urban Wildlife Habitats: A Landscape Perspective.* L.W. Adams. 1994. University of Minn. Press, Minneapolis, MN.

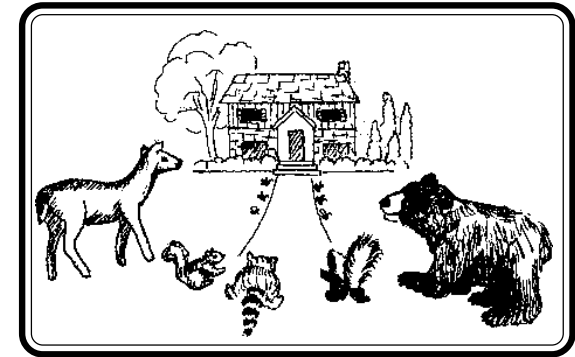
*Wildlife Damage Control.* Website: <http://www.wildlifedamagecontrol.com/>

*Wild Neighbors The Humane Approach to Living with Wildlife.* 1997. John Hadidian, Guy Hodge and John Grandy, eds. The Humane Society of the United States. Washington, D.C.

*Wildlife Solutions Online.* Website: <http://www.wildlifesolutionsonline.com/index.html>

# Putting Out the Unwelcome Mat

Wildlife damage is an increasing problem due to expanding human populations and loss of wildlife habitat. Wildlife often finds our yards and gardens as rewarding substitutes for lost or changed habitats.



## Understanding

***The key to living with wildlife is learning to understand them.***

Mother Nature controls wildlife populations through the availability of food and shelter. Animals are opportunistic, and will take advantage of any source of food and shelter. Understanding the feeding habits, seasonal cycles, reproduction and other behavioral patterns will help you develop a strategy to prevent wildlife damage and live with wildlife.

**Living  
with  
Wildlife**  
[www.fwp.state.mt.us](http://www.fwp.state.mt.us)